

**COMPOSING A CAREER DEVELOPMENT GUIDE
FOR BEAUMONT FIRE/RESCUE SERVICES**

EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Beaumont Fire/Rescue Services did not have a Career Development Guide for firefighters to use as a reference and as a tool to help define their opportunities for professional growth. The purpose of this paper was to examine the benefits of career development and to compose a Career Development Guide for Beaumont Fire/Rescue Services personnel. Historical research methods were employed to answer the following research questions:

1. What does the current literature say about career development?
2. What benefits does the organization derive from career development?
3. What benefits does the individual derive from career development?

Action research methods were used to compose a Career Development Guide for Beaumont Fire/Rescue Services firefighters.

The results revealed the importance of career development to the success of individuals and organizations. It was demonstrated how both individuals and organizations benefit from career development initiatives.

It was suggested that management take steps to promote career development by: (a) making a formal statement of philosophy that emphasizes the department's commitment to career development, (b) role-modeling life-long learning, (c) designing the physical environment to foster career development efforts, (d) recognizing those individuals who pursue career development, (e) utilizing good information control, (f) establishing higher standards for hiring and promotions.

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INTRODUCTION

Beaumont Fire/Rescue Services did not have a Career Development Guide for firefighters to use as a reference and as a tool to help define their opportunities for professional growth. The purpose of this paper was to examine the benefits of career development and to compose a Career Development Guide for Beaumont Fire/Rescue Services personnel. Historical research methods were employed to answer the following research questions:

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BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Beaumont Fire/Rescue Services has employed 234 career firefighters and is located on the Neches River in southeast Texas, near the Texas - Louisiana border. The department has been responsible for providing fire and first responder medical services to approximately 115,000 residents, and has responded within a jurisdiction of approximately 90 square miles. Beaumont has been home to Lamar University, who has offered an Associate's degree program in Fire Protection Technology for many years. Even with a local university and a department sponsored tuition reimbursement program, firefighters generally have not taken advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. The following tables show the breakdown of personnel who have attended college and those who have been graduated:

Table 1
Breakdown of Credited College Hours for Beaumont Fire/Rescue Services Personnel

Total College Hours	Number of Personnel	Percentage
Up to 30 semester hours	17	7.23%
30 to 60 semester hours	15	6.38%
60 to 120 semester hours	39	16.60%
120+ semester hours	21	8.94%
Total Personnel with College Hours	91	38.72%

Table 2
Breakdown of Degree Types Received by Beaumont Fire/Rescue Services Personnel

Type of Degree	Number of Personnel	Percentage
Associate's Degree - Fire Protection Technology	24	10.21%
Associate's Degree - Other	14	5.96%
Bachelor's Degree - Fire Technology/Administration	0	0.00%
Bachelor's Degree - Other	21	8.94%
Master's Degree - Fire and Emergency Management	0	0.00%
Master's Degree - Other	2	0.85%

The impact, both past and present, of individuals not taking advantage of the educational opportunities available to them has adversely affected Beaumont Fire/Rescue Services in particular, and the fire service in general. Individuals who have become stagnant in their careers are generally a drain on the organization. Bolman and Deal (1997) note that those who become stagnant underutilize human energy and talent, are frustrated individuals, and encourage people to withdraw, resist or rebel. If firefighters are to be viewed as professionals by the broader community and reap the benefits from that designation, they must move toward higher standards for themselves and their organizations.

The cultural change required in making this move towards higher standards is directly related to “Unit 2 - Professional Development” and “Unit 7 - Organizational Culture” of the *Executive Development* course of the National Fire Academy’s Executive Fire Officer Program. The professional development module stressed the importance of maximizing one’s learning potential, understanding one’s learning style, and developing a personal vision for oneself that is ultimately beneficial to the individual and the organization. The organizational culture module emphasized the profound impact that the established culture has on organizations, and indicated methods for groups to use that will contribute to “reworking” the organizational philosophy as a means of strengthening the system. The move towards professional development also has an indirect relationship to “Unit 10 - Service Quality.” The broader understanding created when a workforce is optimally developed will likely result in enhanced quality of services to the customer.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Arthur (1998) cited some alarming statistics about the American workforce: (a) Only 66 percent of Americans who finish high school graduate with adequate skills; (b) One in every seven American adults is a functional illiterate, unable to read, write, calculate, or solve even simple problems; (c) Functionally illiterate people compromise 30 percent of unskilled workers, 29 percent of semiskilled workers, and 11 percent of all managers, professionals, and technicians; (d) Half of our nation's industrial workers read at or below the eighth-grade level.

Traditionally, the fire service has required minimal educational standards. In many departments, even today, there are firefighters that fall into the statistics cited above. In the early days of firefighting, physical strength and stamina were the most important qualities of a successful firefighter. But the nature of the fire service and requirements placed upon it have changed. The job of firefighter today has been recognized for its high risk, public responsibility, and professionalism (Booth, 1999). It has been noted that "that the job of a firefighter has moved from one that relies predominantly on brute strength to one with considerable intellectual demands." (Booth, 1999, p. 69). This fact holds true not only for fire officers, where graduate degrees have become the norm, but for entry level firefighters as well. As this evolutionary trend continues, it has become increasingly important for firefighters and their organizations to take a closer look at current and future levels of expectations and their relationship to career and organizational development.

"Today, a firefighter's survival depends - literally and figuratively - on that firefighter's commitment to learning and on the fire organization's desire to provide valid opportunities for that learning to occur!" (Ryan, 1995, p.13). It is then good resource management and makes sense to have

a better understanding of the personal and professional needs of our firefighters, and to have some kind of roadmap for them to follow (Compton, 1996). Helping firefighters to grow and develop has not only been the right thing to do, it's been good business. Greene (1986) noted that,

Through career development, employees have the opportunity to earn higher salaries, increase their responsibility and authority, and ultimately grow to their full potential. As this occurs, the department is provided with knowledgeable, effective employees who strive to improve themselves and their jobs. (p. 8)

Granito (1992) stated that fire departments with positive public images, that have been viewed as efficient, effective and essential, are more likely to have received high levels of community support. It follows that marketing of fire and emergency services has been easier when the community at large has a positive perception of the quality of services that the department provides. Improved service quality that becomes possible through career development efforts, then, has helped contribute to the evolution of the fire service as a "profession."

Templeton (1996) noted that the customer's perception of service quality is shaped by: (a) The reliability of a product or service, (b) the responsiveness of the organization in meeting the customer's needs, (c) the competence of employees, (d) the degree of access to products and services, (e) the courtesy exhibited by employees when interacting with customers, (f) the ability of the organization to communicate effectively with customers, (g) the credibility of the organization and its employees, (h) the protection of the customer from risk when consuming products or services, (i) the ability of the organization to understand the needs of the customer, (j) the appearance of walk-in sites, equipment and employees.

All of the factors listed above are positively affected when individuals and organizations choose career and organizational growth. The choices that people make at any given moment define them. They set the parameters for both happiness and success. Individuals and organizations can also re-write the beliefs that limit them or cause them difficulty if they so choose. Hanks, G. Pulsipher and D. Pulsipher (1997) shared a reminder of the critical need for a positive, forward-looking vision to guide these choices when they stated that, “the choices that we make expand or restrict the future possibilities and decisions available to us.” (p. 8). Personal and career growth helps establish and maintain this promising vision.

Like individuals, groups have common beliefs. The collective beliefs shared by firefighters have defined the fire service. These beliefs have determined how departments, organizationally, have interpreted the rest of the world, and in turn, how the rest of the world has interpreted them. Successful organizations have worked to shape the collective beliefs of their personnel. A means to accomplish this organizational consistency has been a dedication to life-long learning. Dayton (1995) noted that “the trick is to continue learning new information and to look at the world around us with a fresh eye. Looking not just to reinforce what we already know, but to be *open to new learning*.” (p.14).

Departments that have had a positive public image and strong community support are also better protected from outside threats. St. John (1994) listed the three following threats to the fire department’s continued survival: (a) the increased competition with other municipal departments for often scarce financial resources, (b) the consolidation of municipal departments to provide similar services and to achieve greater economic efficiency, (c) the privatization of government services to reduce operating expenses and lower taxes.

Growth and development efforts have also been essential in avoiding legal threats. Developing personnel as a means of strengthening organizations has helped to provide needed legal protection for workers and departments. Weiss (1995) noted that customers and employees have discovered their civil, contract and tort rights. He stressed the importance of combating ignorance of the legal system when he stated,

Few managers consciously decide to breach a contract, or to discriminate, or to violate public policy. Instead, they find themselves in trouble because they did not think at all or because they spoke or acted out of ignorance of the law. Still, ignorance of the law is no defense.” (p. 3).

To summarize the literature, development of people and organizations has been much more complex than compiling a list of job descriptions and course offerings. Individually and organizationally, it has centered on the choices that are made and the risks that are taken. It has been a difficult mix of teaching, coaching, modeling and mentoring positive life and work-related knowledge and skills. It has been much more than any single handbook could communicate. It has been dedication to ourselves and others.

The literature stated very clearly the complexity of the process and the necessity for guidance in making choices, both career and personal. Bolman and Deal (1997) summarized this concept when they said,

(We) need to understand that any event or process can serve multiple purposes and that different participants are often operating in different frames. They need a diagnostic map that helps them assess which frames are likely to be salient and helpful in any given situation. Several lines of recent research find that effective leaders and effective organizations rely on multiple

frames. Studies all point to the need for multiple perspectives in developing a holistic picture of complex systems. (p. 279).

Structured career development has provided guidance to individuals who have varied ambitions and goals. It has helped define career options, and has pointed people in a positive direction. It has been an aid, or tool that has helped workers make better choices. In a world full of differing perspectives, it has been a roadmap that has helped spawn individual and organizational growth along common lines.

Finding common threads while broadening one's perspective has been an essential element to career and personal growth. It has become critical that people understand the differing needs, desires, interests, skills, values and personalities of others (Tieger & Barron-Tieger, 1995), and be able to integrate them effectively. Bolman and Deal (1997) expressed this idea when they stated, "Our theories and images determine what we see, what we do, and what we accomplish. Perspectives too simple or too narrow become fallacies that cloud rather than illuminate." (p. 34).

PROCEDURES

Research Methodology

This research project employed a historical research methodology to examine the meaning of career development and to explore the individual and organizational benefits of career development efforts. The procedure used to complete this portion of the project was a thorough review of current literature. The literature review targeted journals, magazines, and books that contained information on career and personal development, their interrelatedness, benefits, and importance to individual and

organizational success.

An action research methodology was employed to compose a Career Development Guide for Beaumont Fire/Rescue Services personnel. The procedure used to develop the guide included review of guides previously developed from six fire departments from across the country, including Fullerton (CA) Fire Department, Phoenix (AZ) Fire Department, Glendale (AZ) Fire Department, Fairfax County (VA) Fire Department, San Clemente (CA) Fire Department and Sugarland (TX) Fire Department. The resulting document, appearing in the Appendix, was both a synthesis and adaptation of the guides mentioned previously. The guide also includes information gained through the literature review and other pertinent materials obtained from the Texas Commission on Fire Protection, various universities, and the National Fire Academy.

Limitations

The primary limitation affecting this research project was time. The six month time frame was a major consideration when faced with the sheer volume of materials available related to career and personal development. While the literature review referenced a variety of materials, it would have been prohibitive to allocate additional time on identifying potentially useful references at the expense of completing the Career Development Guide itself.

Another limitation that was directly related to time was the review of guides from only six fire departments. These guides were a small sample of what may be available from across the country. A more complete review of the resources used by other fire departments could have produced a more refined product.

RESULTS

A copy of the Beaumont Fire/Rescue Services Career Development guide is provided in the Appendix of this project.

Answers to Research Questions

1. What does the current literature say about career development?

Career development has been a critical ingredient to the success of individuals and organizations. Current literature recognized that career development has built success at work and in life through improved competence, interpersonal skills, dependability, and compatibility of personnel. It has raised the skill and ability level of employees, and improved service quality. It has raised individual's self esteem through personal achievements and recognition.

The literature consistently emphasized the importance of lifelong learning in the career development process. Ryan (1995) noted that, "careers in the emergency response professions require a personal and organizational commitment to both initial and continuing education." (p. 13). Technology and other changes have forced individuals and organizations to continually evolve and to keep pace through lifelong learning and updating.

The importance of setting goals and establishing a learning plan as a guide also was stressed. Many individuals who have taken courses strictly because they enjoyed them have become discouraged when those studies have failed to secure for them the position that they desire. Career development should help to create balanced individuals, but it should also address an individual's arsenal of talents, abilities, skills and knowledge that can be utilized on the job.

The literature suggested that individuals complete a personal inventory to define their strengths

and weaknesses. Essential to this inventory has been determining one's beliefs, attitudes, and values relative to work and interpersonal relationships. In doing this, Tieger and Baron-Tieger (1995) suggested that individuals can find and keep truly fulfilling jobs that enhance the quality of their lives. The primary point and main interest has been in helping employees figure out what career satisfaction is for them and helping them to create it.

Moses (1998) listed five career myths that are key principles of managing a career. She stated that seeing these myths objectively and realistically is the first step toward becoming a career activist: (a) The grass is always greener, (b) there is a perfect skill set for the future, (c) there is a perfect job out there for me, (d) there is an easy answer, (e) there are clear career paths. Buying in to these myths has stifled job satisfaction and has created disgruntled employees. The reality of the situation has been that selecting a career path and making career decisions is hard work and sometimes requires difficult trade-offs.

2. What benefits does the organization derive from career development?

Bolman and Deal (1997) noted that "employees are hired to do a job but always bring social and personal needs with them to the workplace. Both individual satisfaction and organizational effectiveness depend heavily on the quality of interpersonal relationships." (p. 158). How people feel about their careers has affected morale, attendance, productivity, and loyalty to an organization.

Compton (1996) emphasized that the environment that a person works in sets the stage for collective and individual success. Departments that have invested in employees by supporting their career development efforts have built trusting relationships, have gotten the most out of employees, and have retained those with the most potential.

Organizations benefit from the empowerment and vision derived from employee's career development. These attributes have been proven essential to team performance and service quality. To take advantage of these traits, Waitley (1998) stressed that organizations should seek individuals who are internally motivated, who hold their work important for its own sake, who love their field or industry, and who seek the exhilaration of testing their limits and contributing to the world.

Career development is one of the most important investments that can be made in an organization's future. "It's not just our job to manage things today but to develop the people in the organization to manage and lead tomorrow." (Compton, 1996, p. 20). The responsibility of the organization has been to build the future by preparing members for it. This preparation has taken place by encouraging and coaching, by making educational opportunities available, and by mentoring members to preparing them for future assignments.

3. What benefits does the individual derive from career development?

Career development has been achieved in a number of different ways. The primary method employed today has been to attend a college or university. Booth (1999) cited a study performed by the Police Executive Research Foundation which found 17 reasons that a college education benefits candidates coming in to the protective services:

1. A college education develops a broader base of information for decision making. Firefighters with a broader knowledge base are more likely to make appropriate decisions during stressful situations.

2. A college education provides additional years and experiences for increasing maturity. Mature firefighters are also more likely to perform effectively when faced with difficult situations.

3. A college education inculcates responsibility in the individual through course requirements and achievements. The persistence and dedication required in attaining a college degree helps to build an individual's sense of personal responsibility and accountability.

4. A college education permits the individual to learn more about the societal and historical forces that shape our country. This broadening of understanding can help firefighters empathize and deal more effectively with those groups or individuals different from themselves.

5. A college education engenders the ability to handle difficult or ambiguous situations with greater creativity and innovations. Firefighters must handle situations that no other organization or group will attempt to resolve. An innovative mind-set and the ability to form creative solutions quickly are critically needed aptitudes.

6. A college education develops a greater empathy for minorities and their discriminatory experiences both through course work and interactions in the academic environment. Firefighters relate to persons from all walks of life every day. The ability to understand and show empathy to those discriminated against helps build stronger communities and departments.

7. A college education engenders understanding and tolerance for persons with different lifestyles and ideologies. Broadened perspectives and increased tolerance are essential for firefighters so that all persons within the community are served equally.

8. A college education leads to less rigid decision making. Learning to think creatively when reacting to the differing and sometimes complex demands of the college experience builds creative decision making in real world situations.

9. A college education helps individuals communicate to the service needs of the public in a

competent manner. Firefighters who are more knowledgeable, empathetic and in touch with the needs of the community will provide better service to citizens.

10. A college education makes individuals more innovative and flexible when dealing with complex problems. Creativity and innovation are born of a progressive thought process. College studies help to mold this process.

11. A college education allows individuals to better perform tasks with little or no supervision. With higher education, firefighters are more able to handle day-to-day demands and make routine decisions on their own.

12. A college education helps individuals develop better overall community relation skills. Better communication skills and understanding of others help firefighters to interact more effectively with all community groups and individuals.

13. A college education engenders a more “professional” demeanor and performance. Firefighters who have worked to attain their degree perceive themselves as professionals, and they are more likely to exhibit behaviors and attitudes that are considered to be “professional.”.

14. A college education enables individuals to better cope with stress and to be more likely to seek assistance with personal or stress-related problems. Broadened perspectives and understanding of others helps firefighters to realize that stress and its related problems are common, and that seeking help is a positive step.

15. A college education enables individuals to adapt their styles of communication and behavior to a wider range of social conditions. Firefighters must be able to interact effectively with all members of the community. The ability to adapt and to create understanding is an essential skill.

16. A college education tends to make individuals less authoritarian and less cynical. Belief in the potential of oneself and others is an important element in personal development and mentoring others. Firefighters must create a positive vision for themselves and their organizations.

17. A college education enables individuals to more readily accept and adapt to organizational change. Understanding the needs of the organization as well as one's personal needs helps firefighters to better adapt to changing job requirements and situations..

Human resource assumptions have emphasized the fit between individuals and organizations. Career development has helped workers find and maintain work situations that have suited both parties. "When this fit is good, both benefit: individuals find satisfaction and meaning in work; the organization makes effective use of individual talent and energy." (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 140).

Finally, the incremental successes experienced during the career development process has helped to build self esteem. Pitino (1997) stated that self esteem has to be earned if it is to have significant value. He continued by stating,

Now that we have established that high self-esteem is essential for achievement - and we realize that self esteem grows out of our work ethic and our plan of attack - we are ready for the next step. We are ready to start demanding more of ourselves. (p. 41)

DISCUSSION

The literature recognized that career development is essential to successful organizations. To insure that this development is fostered, fire chiefs and managers must take steps to guarantee that the individuals both hired and promoted can operate at specified intellectual/skill levels, and that they are

open to life-long learning experiences. The fire service must shift its focus from a severe emphasis on the physical aspects of the job to a more balanced approach, one that equally sheds light on the increasing mental requirements that are placed upon the emergency services today. Taking the appropriate steps to hire and promote those individuals who are strong - mentally, emotionally, and physically - has become and will remain an increasingly central focus within the profession.

Career development also serves to protect individuals and organizations from the host of potential legal actions that are present today. While there is no way to completely protect oneself from the possibility of litigation, it is essential that individuals and departments do all that is feasible. The individual who is knowledgeable and skillful is less likely to make careless mistakes, and is more likely to be able to defend false or misperceived allegations.

The literature also unanimously supported career development as a means to more effective organizations. Individually and organizationally, firefighters must eliminate the negative beliefs that do not serve them, impede their success, and leave them dissatisfied. They must realize how deeply imbedded current perceptions are, and how all must come together to change them. As Covey (1990) stated, "We began to realize that if we wanted to change the situation, we first had to change ourselves. And to change ourselves effectively, we first had to change our perceptions." (p. 18). Career development can help bring about this change by broadening individual's perspectives and changing their perceptions. This can increase employee's job satisfaction and strengthen their commitment to the organization.

The literature also agreed that career development efforts are beneficial to the individual employee. Personnel are free to grow to their full potential as persons and employees with increased knowledge and a broadening of perspectives. They can become more open-minded and are in a

position to advance, earn more money, and increase their level of authority and responsibility. They become more satisfied workers when they believe that the organization has their best interests at heart.

It was noted that the positive public image generated as a byproduct of career development efforts is priceless to departments. Community support is a necessity for emergency services organizations, and those who are viewed as efficient, effective and essential will prosper. Those departments who exhibit the improved service quality that is associated with career development initiatives, will likely reap increased benefits and enhanced status in the community.

The organization must do all that it can to foster the development of its employees, but the organization can not do it all. There is an important element of individual responsibility and accountability that is present in any career development process. Fox (1998) advises workers to take charge of their careers. He stated that,

Your destiny and your career growth are your responsibility, no one else's. You have to know what you want. You have to design the plan to get there. You have to determine what skills and functional expertise are needed to get to the top in your company. Your responsibility is to acquire that experience. (p.7)

RECOMMENDATIONS

According to Schein (1990), managers and leaders can work to effect change in the organizational culture. Based on the review of the literature and supporting documents, the following recommendations are made to enhance the career development process for Beaumont Fire/Rescue Services and other fire departments:

1. Management should make a formal statement of organizational philosophy that includes and emphasizes the department's commitment to career and personal development efforts. Members should know exactly what the department stands for and, in turn, what is expected of them.

2. Management should deliberately role model life-long learning. Their continual development efforts should be visible to department members. As Covey (1990) stated, "In the last analysis, what *we are* communicates far more eloquently than anything we *say* or *do*." (p. 22).

3. Management should design the physical environment to foster development efforts. There should be a range of books, periodicals, journals, videos and other personal and professional development materials readily available to personnel interested in acquiring more knowledge.

4. Management should pay attention to and formally recognize those individuals who give the extra effort that is required in developing themselves and the organization. They should develop explicit reward and status systems, including monetary and other incentives for furthering one's education and development in the profession.

5. Management should utilize good information control. They should disseminate accurate information, foster open communication, and monitor the grapevine to counter inaccurate rumors and speculation.

6. Management should establish higher standards for recruitment, selection, and promotion. Hiring, socializing, and promoting members who "fit" within the new culture of the fire service and who meet the changing needs of the organization will be invaluable to the establishment of a more professional department and fire service.

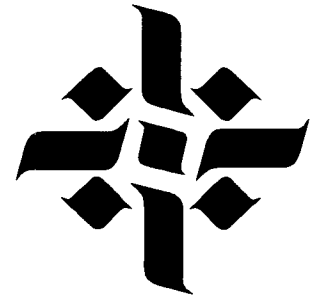
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APPENDIX

Beaumont Fire/Rescue Services Career Development Guide



BEAUMONT FIRE/RESCUE SERVICES

Training & Recruitment
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Career Development Guide

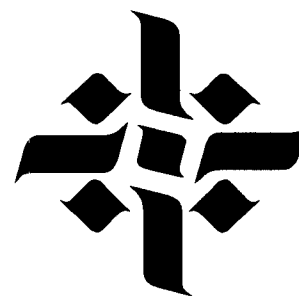
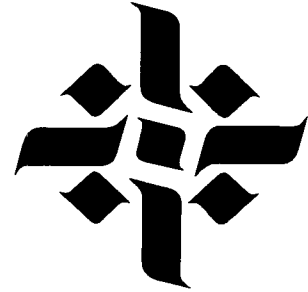


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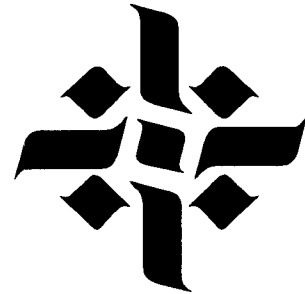
Introduction

This manual contains information aimed at planning a life of continual self improvement... a life that is successful both within and outside the organization. As the title suggests, it is a “guide” to help members become aware of available opportunities and how to access them. It is not an exact formula. Each person places their stamp of individuality on their personal career development process.

A well-planned career obviously benefits both the department and the employee. Certain responsibilities or mutual obligations accompany these benefits. Both the employee and the department must fulfill their roles if this “win-win” benefit is to flourish.

The primary obligations necessary are motivation and opportunity - both must be present. The employee wishing to move forward on the career path must have the motivation to prepare for and accept additional responsibilities and duties. The organization must foster an environment which encourages participation, recognizes employee contributions and efforts, and provides growth opportunities.

Career planning is like any planning... it takes commitment. It also takes follow-through and maintenance. Just as a contractor uses a floor plan to build a house, we must have a plan to reach a specific career goal.



Career Development Basics

The best way to predict your future is to create it.



Today, most people's lives are hurried and complex. Developing a career amidst everything life sends our way can seem overwhelming. With the many expectations and directions that we're pulled in on any given day, it's a wonder that we're still in one piece. For the men and women of the fire service, expectations come with the added pressure of knowing that our actions may determine the fate of someone else. But what we must not lose sight of is that *being a firefighter* is not just a career, it's a **vocation** . . . and developing a vocation is a significant part of developing our lives.

About Career Planning

Career planning is a component of **life planning**. The average person spends roughly one-third of his or her adult life working. The career choice that we make influences our entire lives. A career is more than just a job. It is a map of a person's progress through life. Since it is difficult to completely separate our career choice from the balance of our lives, it becomes important to plan the route we want to take if we are to reach our ideal destination.

The Career Planning Myths

The career planning process is never-ending, it happens in a definite order, and tends to take place in cycles. Throughout our working lives, we move back and forth between self-assessment, preparation, and career management. To be content in this process and in any career, it is important to understand the misperceptions that many people have about careers. In Career Intelligence: The 12 New Rules for Work and Life Success, Barbara Moses dispels five common career myths that keep people dissatisfied in their work:

- ❶ *The grass is always greener . . .* The most widespread career myth is that

other people don't work as hard as you do; that they make more money; are able to make a satisfying contribution; get more appreciation for their efforts; and just generally have more fun.

People everywhere complain that they are overworked and underpaid. When you take the time to look at yourself, and *objectively* view your situation, you may be pleasantly surprised to discover that there are many things about your work that you enjoy!



② *There is a perfect skill set for the future . . .* Even in the fire service, there is no perfect set of skills that all individuals can equally develop that will apply to all situations. Since we all have unique aptitudes, a person will probably be most successful when developing him/herself in areas where he or she already excels. Build on your strengths and expand them. If you are very gifted in one area, it can compensate for weakness in another.

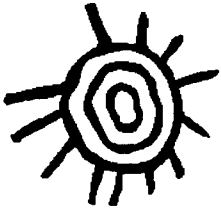
③ *There is a perfect job out there for me . . .* There are no perfect jobs. We might perceive a work situation to be exciting or provide better opportunities, but no single situation will meet all of our needs or expectations.

④ *There is an easy answer . . .* Making career decisions is hard work. To be successful, you must take a hard look at yourself, your options, and decide what compromises you will be comfortable making.

⑤ *There are clear career paths . . .* The fire service is changing and growing. What is a clear path today may not be so clear tomorrow. To prepare for the changes that we most assuredly will face, we must build skills sets that meet the changing needs of the organization and community.

Making a Career

A career is something you do because you are inspired to do it. In a speech during a college commencement exercise, Edward James Olmos told the graduates, "Chase your passion, not your pension. Be inspired to learn as much as you can, to find a cause that benefits humankind --- and you'll be sought after for your quality of service and dedication to excellence . . . Those who do more than they're paid for are always sought for their services. Their name and their work will outlive them."



The Role of Motivation

Real motivation is an inner force that compels behavior. If you are really committed to doing your best, *you must provide your own motivation*. The motivation that endures comes from inside ourselves. Studies have proven that achiever's inner drive toward excellence and independence is far more powerful than their desire for money, recognition, or status. They know where they are going because they have a compelling image inside that drives them toward their goals.

It has been shown that the most telling predictor of significant achievement in a person is the **desire for excellence**. This means that our success depends, to a great extent, on our motives. In almost every field, the most successful people have achieved greatness out of a desire to express what they felt had to be expressed. They were inspired and persistent in their aims. They were compelled to give their very best.

Work for Inner Satisfaction

If we are to be happy in our lives, both at work and personally, it is very important to do "what we do" for the inner satisfaction that it provides. Unless a firefighter wins the lottery, he or she will never be rich. Vocations rarely make a person a millionaire.

Ray Kroc, the founder of McDonald's, said that the first thing a person needs is the love of an idea. When you first became a firefighter, how did you feel? Were you proud? And excited? And ready to save the world? Remember, the **love of the idea** that you experienced then. It's within you now. Embrace it.

The people who consistently do things well set their own standards and make themselves measure up. By doing this they:

- ✓ Give the best of themselves for the benefit of others, and
- ✓ Build a kind of security that lasts a lifetime . . . they endure.

What do you Value?

Identifying your values is an important part of a successful career plan. How do you feel about the "work" of the fire service and the contribution it makes to society? Satisfaction and success come from pursuing work that is in line with your personal values.

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Work values can be divided into two functional categories. ***Intrinsic*** values relate to a specific interest in the work activities, or to the benefits that the work contributes to society. ***Extrinsic*** values are positive external conditions related to the work choice, like potential for making a lot of money. The following table shows a list of values that people have identified as important to them in their careers. Rate them using the following scale:



- 1 = Things I value very much**
2 = Things I value
3 = Things I don't value very much

	Help Society - contribute to improving the world we live in
	Help Others - directly help others, either individually or in groups
	Public Contact - have day to day contact with people
	Work with Others - work as a team member toward common goals
	Work Alone - have limited contact with others
	Competition - pit my abilities against others
	Make Decisions - decide courses of action and policies
	Work under Pressure - in situations where time pressure is prevalent
	Influence People - influence that attitudes and opinions of others
	Gain Knowledge - engage in the pursuit of knowledge and understanding
	Become an Expert - become an expert in whatever I do
	Be Creative - create new programs, materials, organizational structures
	Supervision - be directly responsible for the work of others
	Change and Variety - have work activities that change often
	Attention to Detail - work in situations where accuracy/precision is important
	Predictability/Stability - have duties that are mostly predictable
	Security - be assured of keeping my job, no matter what
	Recognition - be publicly recognized for the high quality of my work
	Fast Pace/Excitement - work must be accomplished quickly
	Financial Gain - make a lot of money
	Physical Challenge - activities challenge my physical capabilities

Personality and Attitudes

What you **value** directly influences your personality and attitudes. Who are you really right now? Don't worry about the person you'd like to be . . . who are you today? Each one of us is unique, and has different tolerance levels for risk-taking, chaos, detail, etc. When you think that you have a good idea of who YOU think you are, ask your friends and family. Do they see you as you see yourself? Think of your top 5 personality traits. Would others agree with your assessment?

Prepare Yourself

Developing YOURSELF is a vital part of career development. It must begin with you. You must objectively assess your personal strengths, weaknesses, and abilities. Capitalize on your strengths, strive to improve your weaknesses.



Education and Training are essential to career development. Based on your career aspirations, you should develop an individual educational plan that is responsive to both current and future needs. Fire Science courses can provide the technical base of knowledge beneficial to all firefighters. They are especially important in the initial stages of a firefighter's career. They should be considered as immediate goals in your education plan.

Take advantage of opportunities to seek and upgrade certifications, attend seminars, and rotate jobs. Working in a position creates a real understanding of how a particular division functions. Just ask someone who's been through Fire Alarm recently!

Lifelong Learning

Studies have shown that people who remain mentally and physically active actually age "better." If your career is in line with your value system, then you will most likely be more satisfied with the work situation. Satisfied people are much more likely to commit themselves to expanding their knowledge and skills in a field than those who are dissatisfied. And of those who are happy with their situation, lifelong learners have proven to be the most satisfied and productive people of all.

To be successful in the fire service or in any line of work, you must constantly be prepared to adapt to change. To move forward, you must have a **challenge** that stretches your present capabilities, and a **commitment** to making positive things happen. You must take **control** of your situation, proactively charting your course. Finally, you must **connect** with others for support and encouragement along the way.

Success at Work

Imagine yourself at your retirement. Looking back on your career, how would you define “success?” What attributes and knowledge would you possess, contributions would you have made, positions would you have held? How would your coworkers feel about your leaving the department? Were you respected, admired, sought out by others? Did you feel as though your efforts helped make a difference?

Not every person has the desire to become Chief of the Department . . . and that’s o.k.. The point is to decide what being successful really means to YOU, and then behave **today**, and every day, so that your retirement vision becomes a reality.

Shaping the Organization



When firefighters develop in their careers, they have the opportunity to earn more money, increase their authority and responsibility, and ultimately grow to their full potential. All through this process, the Department is strengthened through knowledgeable, effective, and productive employees who strive to improve themselves, their jobs, the organization, and the community. Both individually and collectively, everyone “wins.”

Get Involved!

The only way to make the organization become everything that you want it to be is to get involved. Involvement begins with a basic understanding of how **every** division of the department **really** operates . . . seeing the “Big Picture.” Learn all that you can about the department *as an organization*. Just how are different items purchased? How does the budget process work? What are the regulatory requirements related to training and certifications? What kind of documentation is required? What is my level of personal responsibility?

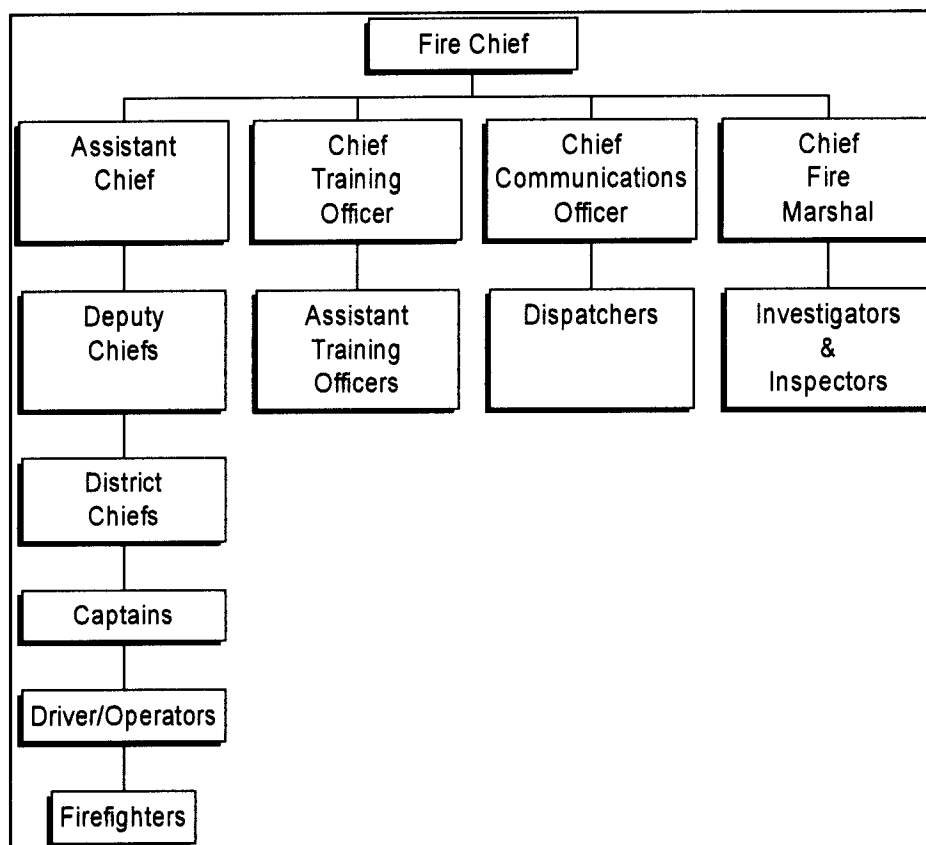
What about code compliance for different types of occupancies? How does the CAD system work and why is it set up the way it is? What other responsibilities are dispatchers given? Why have we chosen a particular method when responding to a particular incident? What are other *progressive* departments doing for that same type of situation? We must understand how each individual and role plays a part in making the organization successful. When you acquire this knowledge, you are able to see the Department from a broader perspective, and become a driving force behind positive change.

Participate in the Process

Having a broad-based knowledge of the Department is the first step to creating positive change. Next, you must be willing to participate in the process. This means that you are willing to stand up for those things you feel are critical to the success of the *organization* . . . and that you are able to back up your beliefs with a logical argument based on sound facts!

Participating in the process also means that you must work within the system to effectively change it. If you want to be heard, you must present **SOLUTIONS** to the problem at hand, and be persistent in your approach. It may take many revisions before a situation is resolved. If the outcome you desire is truly important, wait for the proper timing, and present it again . . . and again . . . and again.

Organizational Chart



Job Summaries

General Comments

Each job in the fire department comes with its own set of responsibilities. As people move up the promotional ladder, they must take on more and different duties. Departmental success is dependent on each individual taking responsibility for, and being accountable for, doing their job effectively.

The most important thing to remember is that as you rise through the ranks, you must be willing to continually learn and grow. The purpose of these summaries is to give you an *idea* of what is necessary to perform well in any given position, so that you can plan the career that is the right “fit” for you and the department.

Fire Suppression Opportunities

Firefighter

Firefighters perform under the direct or indirect supervision of fire officers, based on departmental uniform operating guidelines. Even though firefighters are supervised, they must exercise initiative and show by their knowledge, skill and actions that they thoroughly understand fire suppression, prevention, rescue and emergency medical methods and techniques. Firefighters must keep physically fit to perform optimally.

Typically, firefighters respond to a variety of both emergency and non-emergency activities. Emergency incidents may include structure fires, vehicle extrications, confined space or other technical rescues, water rescues, emergency medical, and hazardous materials emergencies. Non-emergency types of activities include salvage operations like water removal, public assistance calls, and fire prevention and public education programs.

When not responding, firefighters participate in a variety of specialized training courses, maintain equipment and stations, inspect and maintain the city’s hydrant system, and pre-plan responses to particular hazard occupancies in their territory.

Fire Driver/Operator

In addition to the responsibilities of a firefighter, driver/operators must have a deeper understanding of the operating and mechanical principles of fire apparatus and equipment. Driver/operators must have a specific knowledge of the layout of the city, the street system, and hydrant system. They must know their equipment well enough to be able to diagnose problems and trouble-shoot when necessary.

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Driver/Operators must practice defensive driving at all times. They must exercise good judgement in the placement of apparatus and equipment at emergency scenes. They must thoroughly understand fire service hydraulics and fire pump operations. Since driver/operators may be temporarily upgraded to serve as captains, it is extremely important that they work to develop supervisory and interpersonal skills.

Fire Captain

Captains must have an even broader depth of knowledge of firefighting, hazardous materials, rescue, and emergency medical methods. They must have an even greater understanding of methods and techniques, and a broader knowledge of topics like building construction and legal regulations.

Company officers are at the heart of the department. The *quality* of service that the department provides hinges on the dedication, depth of knowledge and skill of Fire Captains. They must be teachers, who model the correct technical applications, as well as discipline, diligence, integrity and a desire for continued growth.

Captains must be able to express their ideas clearly, both verbally and in writing. They must be able to research and effectively transmit information that helps to bring about positive change within the department. They must have a real understanding of and be able to work within the established system to effectively improve it.

District Chief

While Captains are the heart of the emergency response arm of the department, their development and resulting success depends largely on the District Chiefs.. They must make sure that a sense of uniformity is maintained throughout their district and the department. They must have a true regard for firefighter safety and service quality that translates into supervision that is strict, but fair.

District Chiefs must be able to communicate clearly with persons from all walks of life, using a variety of methods. They must be able to conduct research and investigations, and must be able to participate effectively when dealing with administrative and personnel issues, planning, and organizational development.

District Chiefs must be obsessed with development, both their own and their employee's. They must be conscious of how their behaviors effect morale and performance, and do all that they can to be a positive influence.

Deputy Chief

Deputy Chiefs are executives. They are responsible for the overall performance and well-being of an entire shift of people. The knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and behaviors of the Deputy Chiefs are a key component is the development of the “personality” of the shift.

Deputy Chiefs must possess an in-depth knowledge of all areas of fire department operations, from fire suppression to the budget process. They must be able to contribute constructively to the department’s planning process, as well as make strategic decisions on the fireground. They must develop *both* their knowledge and skill in day-to-day operational matters, and in administrative, policy, and planning matters.

Non-Suppression Opportunities

Assistant Training Officer

Training Officers are staff officers who assist in the development of the departmental training program. As well as having a thorough knowledge of suppression, rescue, emergency medical, and haz mat operations, training officers must understand *how* people learn. They help to develop creative strategies that assist personnel in developing to their full potential.

Training Officers must be excellent communicators. They must work effectively with firefighters, administrators and the public to coordinate drills and activities that are positive learning experiences. They must be able to conduct research, survey and assess training needs, and develop themselves as instructors. They must have a detailed knowledge of regulatory agencies and their requirements.

Training Officers also assist with the operation of the Beaumont Fire/Rescue Training Center. The Training Officer’s responsibilities relative to the Center include assisting with schools and instructing, field maintenance, and marketing the facility by meeting with potential clients.

Chief Training Officer

Chief Training Officers carry the overall responsibility for the long-term growth of the department through the departmental training program. They must have an extensive knowledge of all aspects of fire department operations. Chief Training Officers not only form long- and short-range plans of how the department will develop, they must understand budgeting and a host of other administrative functions. They must be excellent communicators and presenters. They must have a detailed knowledge of legal requirements and regulations that apply to both training and safety of personnel.

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Chief Training Officers are also responsible for the development of the Training Center. They must actively participate in planning and marketing efforts for the Center. They must work closely with industrial clients and Lamar University to promote the facility. They must be able to efficiently report on the progress and financial status of the Center. A thorough understanding of budgeting, project management, and facilities management is essential.

Fire Dispatcher

Fire Dispatchers are a vital link in the successful outcome of any emergency incident. Dispatchers are responsible for the deployment of an appropriate type and level of response for an incident, as well as for effective communications with the public and emergency responders. They must make critical decisions that directly affect the outcome of an incident based on limited information, operating guidelines, protocols, and overall knowledge of fire department operations.

Above all, effective dispatchers must be quick-thinkers. They must be able to act quickly, calmly, and correctly in situations that are often chaotic and where callers can be hysterical. Dispatchers must have an extensive knowledge and skill in the use of Computer-Aided Dispatch systems, and other computer software. They must speak clearly and concisely, and be able to follow moderately complex oral and written instructions or procedures.

Dispatchers must be able to maintain their composure when under severe mental stress. They must be friendly and helpful to the public when responding to their emergency or non-emergency needs.

Chief Communications Officer

Chief Communications Officers are responsible for the short- and long-term communications equipment needs of the department. As a Division Head, they must have an extensive understanding of the budget process, project planning, policy-development process, and supervision. They must have knowledge and skill in the use of all types of communications processes, equipment, and computer hardware and software.

Chief Communications Officers are also responsible for the training and development of dispatchers. They are responsible for the eight week training and orientation program for new dispatchers. Continuing education of current dispatchers in all aspects of communications, including caller questioning techniques and pre-arrival instruction information is also the Chief Communication Officer's responsibility.

Investigator I - Fire Inspector

Fire Inspectors must have a broad knowledge of fire and building codes, laws, and requirements of regulatory agencies. They must maintain a positive working relationship with building owners and occupants, while educating them about complying with their responsibilities relative to fire and life safety in the community. They must be highly organized and systematic in their approach, and must enforce laws, ordinances, and regulations with both tact and firmness.

Inspectors are also active in public fire education and information activities. They must be able to speak comfortably in front of groups, express themselves clearly, and plan and deliver educational programs. As well as speak clearly and confidently, inspectors should be able to write well. They must be able to prepare written documentation of non-compliance, news releases, programs, and reports.

Investigator II - Fire and Arson Investigator

Fire and Arson Investigators assume the same responsibilities as Fire Inspectors, along with additional duties. They may conduct more difficult or complex inspections, and assume fire/arson and other investigatory duties. They must be efficient fact finders.

Organizational skills and the ability to speak and write clearly are essential for fire and arson investigators. They must have supervisory skills and be able to assist and guide Inspectors when necessary. Investigators assist in preparing cases through working with police and other agencies. They must understand the legal system, and they must be certified Peace Officers.

Fire Marshal

The Fire Marshal is the Division Head that is responsible for the overall community fire prevention program. Fire Marshals must have an extensive knowledge of firefighting, fire prevention, and investigations. They must also understand codes, laws and regulations, and be able to interpret them correctly. They must have excellent organizational and supervisory skills.

Fire Marshals must be able to establish and maintain positive working relationships with a broad range of people from across the community. They must be able to express their ideas clearly, both orally and in writing. They are concerned with both supervising the day-to-day activities of the division, and the long-range fire prevention effort. They must be able to plan and implement effective community-wide programs that focus on fire prevention and public fire education.

Supply Officer

Supply Officers acquire, store, and issue the equipment and supplies necessary for the operation of the department. Supply Officers must be organized, have an understanding of the budget and purchasing process, and have a broad knowledge of department operations. They meet with vendors, establish specifications for products or equipment, and review requisitions.

Supply Officers also coordinate the building and equipment maintenance needs of the department. They must be able to develop positive relationships with vendors and suppliers, personnel, other city employees, and the public. They must be knowledgeable of purchasing practices and efficient at record keeping.

Assistant Fire Chief

The Assistant Fire Chief has a very high level of responsibility. The Assistant Chief oversees the largest division of the department... fire suppression. The success of fire department emergency response operations depends largely on the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the Assistant Chief. This person sets the tone for the day-to-day operations of the department. The Assistant Chief works through the Deputy Chiefs to maintain uniformity in response and operations across the department.

Assistant Chiefs must be prepared to handle any situation that presents itself, from a major emergency incident to a presentation over a much needed item in the budget, and everything in between. They must be able to design, obtain funding for and implement effective programs to enhance the quality of services offered by the department.

Effective communication skills are essential for Assistant Chiefs. They must be able to speak and write clearly. They must be able to formulate cost-benefit analyses and plan effectively. Assistant Chiefs are central to policy design and implementation. They must have the knowledge, skill and experience necessary to be effective leaders. Their decisions and actions impact the future direction and development of the department as a whole.

Like all supervisors, Assistant Chiefs are ultimately accountable for the safety and development of those serving under them. Assistant Chiefs must find the mix of operational guidelines, training, development, and maintenance activities that will lead to optimal performance of firefighters. They must have a complete understanding of, and be able to find solutions to the larger issues related to fire administration and management.

Fire Chief

The Fire Chief is ultimately concerned with the long range growth and development of the department. Fire Chiefs must work through Chief Officers to oversee the normal operation of the department, and to plan for future needs. Fire Chiefs need to have an extensive understanding of all aspects of fire department operations, from suppression to public education. But beyond that, the Fire Chief must understand the administrative and political side of the department... **what it takes to obtain resources - so that we get the "things" we need to operate effectively, today and in the future.**

If you want to be the Chief some day, remember that the set of skills that makes you a good firefighter, or driver, or Captain, is not necessarily the same as the set of skills that the Chief must possess to do a good job. To do a good job for the firefighters, department and community, Fire Chiefs must, above all, be effective administrators and communicators. They must have a long range vision for the department, and understand the system well enough to work effectively through it... so that the vision becomes a reality.

Fire Chiefs must be excellent communicators. They must understand and be able to speak knowledgeably about all areas of fire department operation and management. They must understand the system(s) that we operate in, their regulations, constraints, and how we can work within them for the benefit of all. They must be dedicated to personal and professional growth, and expect the same from their subordinates.

Special Teams Requirements

Hazardous Materials Response Team

Applicants for the Hazardous Materials Response Team must meet the following criteria:

- ❶ Be in good physical condition as verified by qualified medical personnel,
- ❷ Be able to operate in chemical protective clothing,
- ❸ Be willing to participate in both in-service training and special schools held outside the department,
- ❹ Be able, after sufficient training, to demonstrate competency in all areas of hazardous materials response operations at the Technician level

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as outlined in 29 CFR 1910.120, SARA I, and NFPA 472.

Application is made through the Deputy Chief. For complete application procedures, refer to the Uniform Operating Guidelines, "Haz Mat Team Application."

To maintain membership on the team, the member must attend a minimum of 24 hours of technician level training sessions, eight of which must be field operations. In addition, all members and candidates shall attend at least one special class made available either within or outside the department every two years. Haz Mat Team members must take and pass an annual medical physical.

Haz Mat Team members currently receive incentive pay of \$50 per month. Team Leaders receive \$60 per month.

Dive Team

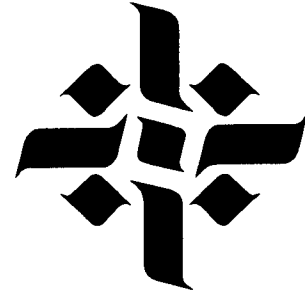
Applicants for the Dive Team must meet the following requirements:

- ❶ Be in good physical condition as verified by competent medical personnel,
- ❷ Be a certified SCUBA diver or be able to undergo and pass certification for SCUBA,
- ❸ Be willing to participate in both in-service training and specialized schools outside the department,
- ❹ Be able, with sufficient training, to demonstrate competency in all areas of SCUBA operations.

Application for the Dive Team is made through the Deputy Chief. For complete application procedures, refer to Uniform Operating Guidelines, "Dive Team Operating Guidelines and Mission Statement."

To maintain membership on the team, members must attend a minimum of six team training sessions and make a minimum of four dives per year, with at least one dive per quarter. Divers must take and pass an annual medical physical.

Dive Team members currently receive incentive pay of \$50 per month.



Higher Education Opportunities

The single most powerful investment we can ever make in life is investment in ourselves, in the only instrument we have with which to deal with life and contribute.

The fire service is quickly moving toward higher qualifications for entry and promotion. At the center of this evolution is higher education. The fire service of the future will require college course work at time of hire and for promotions. This section lists current opportunities available in higher education, and the department's role in supporting the educational effort.

National Fire Academy

Resident and Non-Resident Programs

The National Fire Academy is located in Emmitsburg, Maryland. The NFA offers resident programs that target middle- and top-level fire officers, instructors, and technical professionals. The Academy also offers distance delivery training in local communities.

The resident program operates on a two semester year with a separate application period for each semester. Generally, applications are accepted from May 1 to June 30 and November 1 to December 31. Application procedures vary depending on the program. If you are interested in attending a resident program, contact the Training Division to review the Catalog of Courses for those you might qualify for.

Executive Fire Officer Program

The Executive Fire Officer Program is a four year resident program of the National Fire Academy. It is quickly becoming a standard certification to be obtained by Chiefs Officers and Fire Chiefs. Students must attend a two week residency program each year. Following the two week course, the student must complete and pass an applied research project within six months of course

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completion to remain in the program.

To be accepted in the Executive Fire Officer Program, applicants must meet the following qualifications:

- ❶ Chiefs of department or equivalent,
- ❷ Chief officers or equivalent who head major bureaus or divisions,
- ❸ Must have attained a terminal academic degree of associate level or greater from a regionally accredited institution of higher learning.

The program is designed to enhance officer's professional development through a unique series of four graduate-and upper-level college equivalent courses. A certificate of completion is awarded only after the successful completion of the final research project. If you are interested in applying, contact the Training Division for more information.

Degrees at a Distance Program

The Degrees at a Distance Program is a way for you to take college courses that can be used towards a bachelor's degree with concentration in the areas of fire administration or fire prevention technology. The program is offered through a national network of four-year colleges and universities. It provides you with the opportunity to get a college education through independent study. No classroom attendance is required.

Even if you are not interested in pursuing a degree, you can upgrade your professional skills and receive credit. The NFA issues certificates for the successful completion of six courses. The network includes the following institutions:

- Cogswell College - Sunnyvale, CA
- University of Cincinnati - Cincinnati, OH
- University of Memphis - Memphis, TN
- Western Oregon University - Monmouth, OR
- University of Maryland - College Park, MD
- Western Illinois University - Macomb, IL
- SUNY Empire State College - Saratoga Springs, NY

Lamar University

Lamar University offers a number of different degree programs. Some of those which may be useful for careers in the fire service include fire protection technology, public or business administration, or education. If you are interested in applying to Lamar and need assistance, contact the Training Division.

A.A.S. in Fire Protection Technology

For many years, Lamar University has offered an associate degree program in Fire Protection Technology. The associate degree program includes 69 semester hours of courses. This includes 42 semester hours of “fire-related” courses, from *Fundamentals of Fire Protection* to *Fire Administration II*. The remainder of the curriculum includes general knowledge requirements.

Classes are normally offered in the evenings, once a week, for three hours per night. One class is usually equivalent to three semester hours. Full time students usually take two years to complete the program.

Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences

This degree plan appeals to the older than average, working student who has specific training gained outside the traditional college setting. Up to 24 credit hours can be awarded for training obtained through your work. It is a general degree program, that allows for taking a broader range of classes.

Masters Degree Programs

Lamar offers Masters Degrees in a variety of programs, including public and business administration, education, and engineering. Many masters programs offer both day and evening classes that appeal to working students.

Other Correspondence Opportunities

Oklahoma State University

Oklahoma State University offers a Master of Political Science with emphasis in Fire and Emergency Management degree. The program is designed to provide a sound educational foundation for those who are currently serving or aspire to serve as managers or administrators in fire services or emergency management.

The degree requires 39 semester hours of graduate credit. A three to six hour practicum involves the completion of a comprehensive Program Design Exercise and may include an internship. The capstone of the program is an

Assessment Center in which students demonstrate academic, management, and technical competencies.

University of Phoenix

The University of Phoenix offers associate, bachelor and masters and doctoral degrees *online*. They offers an associate's program in General Studies, bachelor's programs in Business, and masters programs in Business, Organizational Management, and Education, and a doctoral degree program in Management in Organizational Leadership.

If you are interested in any of these or other university programs, contact the Training Center.

Educational Reimbursement Program

Educational Differential

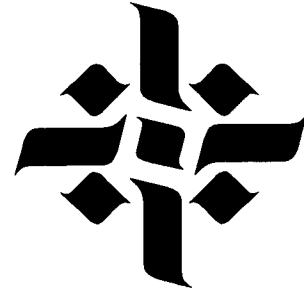
With approval, any full-time employees of the department may enroll in a course and be reimbursed for all books and fee costs related to the approved course, provided they complete the course with a grade of "C" or better. The course work must relate to the member's present position for the purpose of:

- ❶ Improving skills or knowledge required in the present position,
- ❷ Preparing the employee for significant technological changes occurring in the career field,
- ❸ Preparing the employee for assumption of new and different duties.

Employees who receive reimbursement from the City for books and fee costs must remain employed by the City for one year following the reimbursement, or repay the City the amount reimbursed.

Educational Incentive

Any member of the department who is graduated with an Associate Degree, Fire Protection Technology, shall receive a one time payment of \$200 as an educational incentive. This type of incentive is being extended further in departments all across the country. In future years, it is probable that both monetary and other incentives will be offered for bachelor, master and doctoral degrees.



Certification and Continuing Education Information

On a ten point scale, if I am at a level two in any field, and I desire to move to a level five, I must first take the step toward level three. "A thousand mile journey begins with the first step" and can only be taken one step at a time.

There are four agencies that regulate the continuing education and certification programs of the department. These are the Commission on Fire Protection, Texas Department of Health, Environmental Protection Agency, and Insurance Services Office. To maintain or upgrade your certification, you must comply with the agency's rules and requirements. All of these agencies periodically audit the department's training records to insure compliance.

Commission on Fire Protection

Types of Certifications

The Commission offers certifications in eight disciplines. Each has particular requirements for initial certification. The disciplines are:

- Structure Firefighter
- Aircraft Rescue Firefighter
- Marine Firefighter
- Fire Service Instructor
- Fire Inspector
- Fire Investigator
- Arson Investigator
- Haz Mat Technician

Maintenance of Certification

The Commission requires that each individual complete a minimum of 20 hours of continuing education classes each year. Classes that are a refresher or review of the basic firefighter curriculum are limited to 4 hours per year in any one

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subject area. To receive Commission credit for a class, they require that lesson plans and tests be on file, and that instructors are qualified. They recognize, but do not give continuing education credit for certain subject areas, like reports and records.

Failure to comply with the Commission's requirements leads to suspension of certification. When this happens, the person is **prohibited** from performing any duties authorized by the required certificate until the deficiency is resolved. This means that if you work in fire suppression, and your certification is suspended, you **can not** work as a firefighter until the situation is resolved. *This is one reason why it is so important that each **INDIVIDUAL** take responsibility for insuring that they participate in and properly document the training they receive.*

Advanced Certifications

The Commission issues three levels of advanced certification in each of the particular disciplines - Intermediate, Advanced, and Master. The requirements for the various levels of certification for all disciplines except Instructor are:

Intermediate Level

- A. Hold *Basic Certification* in the discipline sought
- B. Have *4 years* of paid fire service experience
- C. Complete one of the three following options:
 - Option 1 - *6 semester hours* of Fire Science or Fire Technology from an approved Fire Protection degree program.
 - Option 2 - *96 clock hours* of National Fire Academy courses.
 - Option 3 - *3 semester hours* of Fire Science or Fire Technology and *48 clock hours* of National Fire Academy courses.

Advanced Level

- A. Hold *Intermediate Certification* in the discipline sought
- B. Have *8 years* of paid fire service experience
- C. Complete one of the four following options:
 - Option 1 - *6 semester hours* of Fire Science or Fire Technology from an approved Fire Protection degree program.
 - Option 2 - *96 clock hours* of National Fire Academy courses.

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Option 3 - 3 semester hours of Fire Science or Fire Technology and 48 clock hours of National Fire Academy courses.

Option 4 - (for Arson Investigator Only) 80 clock hour ATF "Advanced Arson for Profit" course.

Master Level

- A. Hold *Advanced Certification* in the discipline sought
- B. Have 12 years of paid fire service experience
- C. Complete a total of 60 semester hours of college or an associate degree, including 18 semester hours in Fire Science subjects.

The Commission only accepts legible copies of Official College Transcripts and National Fire Academy certificates when making application for higher levels of certification. It is each individual's responsibility to insure that the Training Division receives copies of your transcripts and/or certificates to be filed with your application.

Certification Pay

Firefighters who hold upper level Structure Firefighter Certifications receive a monetary incentive. The rates of certification pay are:

Intermediate Structure Firefighter - \$60 per month

Advanced Structure Firefighter - \$80 per month

Master Structure Firefighter - \$100 per month

Texas Department of Health

Types of Certifications

The Texas Department of Health certifies all emergency medical responders. Certifications offered through the TDH include:

- Emergency Care Attendant
- Emergency Medical Technician - Basic
- Emergency Medical Technician - Intermediate
- Emergency Medical Technician - Paramedic

- Instructor
- Skills Examiner
- Coordinator

Maintenance of Certification

TDH requirements for maintenance of certification vary depending on the type of certification held. Individuals recertify every four years, but must submit a 2-year Continuing Education Summary to show that one-half of the requirement for recertification has been completed at that time.

TDH recognizes six broad subject areas, and requires that continuing education hours be received in each of the six to maintain certification. In simple terms, TDH requires that each individual complete the following *total number* of hours in a **two year** period:

ECA	→ 20 hours
EMT - Basic	→ 40 hours
EMT - Intermediate	→ 60 hours
EMT - Paramedic	→ 80 hours

In addition to the continuing education requirement, individuals must pass a skills test and knowledge test every four years to remain certified.

Environmental Protection Agency

Hazardous Materials Continuing Education Requirement

The Environmental Protection Agency regulates haz mat training. All personnel who may respond at the Operations Level at a haz mat incident are required to have **8 hours** of continuing education training in hazardous materials related subjects every year.

Insurance Services Office

Requirements

The Insurance Services Office is the agency that “rates” fire departments on their capability to provide effective service. This rating is used to determine the community fire insurance rates. Fire Protection is the only municipal service where improved capability can result in savings to taxpayers through reduced

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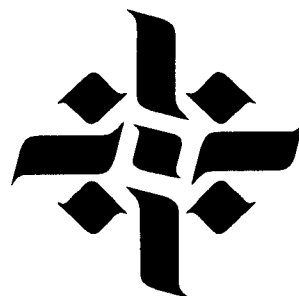
property insurance premiums.

Credit received for **training** compromises 9% of the total ISO grading. They require both knowledge or “classroom” training and drills. The knowledge continuing education requirement falls under the following categories and hour requirements:

- ✓ Company Training → 20 hours per **month**
- ✓ Officer Development Training → 16 hours per **year**
- ✓ Driver/Operator Training → 4 hours per **quarter**
- ✓ New Driver Operator Training → 40 hour course
- ✓ Haz Mat Training → 4 hours per **year**
- ✓ Prefire Planning Inspections → 2 times per **year** per targeted risk

The drill requirement is **four** *single company* AND **four** *multiple company* drills per year. One of each of the single and multiple company drill is to be held at night. ISO prorates credit for each drill based on participation of the members. That means that if only one-half of the total number of firefighters participate in a drill, we will only receive half credit for that drill.

Our community rating is now a Class 4. Moving from a Class 4 to a Class 3 would save taxpayers **8%** on their insurance rates, and moving from a Class 4 to a Class 2 would save taxpayers **11%**. Besides putting money in the taxpayer’s pockets, improving the community rating benefits the department... by proving our professionalism and capabilities to the community.



Getting Promoted

We are limited, but we can push back the borders of our limitations. An understanding of the principle with the confidence that the more we learn, the more clearly we can focus the lens through which we see the world. The principles don't change; our understanding of them does.

Everyone wants to be successful. Success makes us feel important, builds our self esteem, and just plain feels good. The important thing to remember about promotions is, to make sure that the promotion that you “think” you want, is a job that you’ll be able to handle.... that you will feel success from the path you’ve chosen. The best way to insure this is to really learn all that you can about exactly what the job IS and what it SHOULD BE, **before** your promotion.

Preparing Today for Future Responsibilities

Of course preparing oneself for future responsibilities has a lot to do with studying, but it is really much more than that. It is important to learn the technical aspects of any job we aspire to, but it is also important to learn how to interact effectively with others, to be a leader, and even how to be a good follower.

We all have perceptions of what other people DO each day... what their responsibilities are, how they spend their time, what pressures (or lack of) that they experience... just what their job really is. Many times, however, our perceptions don’t quite match up with the reality of a given situation.

Everyone’s job is a lot more complex than their job description implies. One way to really KNOW and UNDERSTAND what others do is to get involved. By spending time helping someone do something that you’ve never really done, you can learn at least a little about what their job really is about. This knowledge helps you to decide whether or not that particular job is one that you would enjoy, and gives you an idea of what it takes to be SUCCESSFUL in the

position. It also helps build relationships and trust, and creates empathy and understanding between people.

The Promotional Process

Individuals must be “in grade” for a minimum of two years before becoming eligible to take the next promotional test. When a position becomes available, the Civil Service Director posts a list of study materials, and later, a notice of the test date and time. Eligible persons interested in taking the test are required to sign up for the test within a specified time period. Those certified as eligible by the Civil Service Director are then admitted to the test on the given date.

Promotional Exams

Preparing for Promotional Exams

“Be Prepared” is a good general rule to follow when taking a promotional exam. This means being prepared for the kind and scope of test that you are going to take and for ALL of the questions that you may be asked. It means having a thorough knowledge of the subjects you’ll be tested over, not just a hazy acquaintance with them. It means being mentally alert, emotionally stable, and well rested.

If you have studied in the proper manner, preparing for the exam itself is largely a matter of review. This review should be an attempt to learn things that you didn’t learn earlier. If just before the exam you are still reading material for the first time and making notes on it, you are already handicapped.

While studying, the best source of questions is yourself. Every time you see a chapter or paragraph heading, questions should come to your mind. Knowing these questions are an aid to your study. Use the question technique in everything you study. Eventually the art of asking questions will become so ingrained that you will not have to stop to formulate them. They will flood in as you read along.

The period of final review before an exam should not be too long. If you work too hard at reviewing too much material, you may become confused and remember less than if you were to follow a less strenuous final review schedule. Reread at a minimum during the final review. Try to recall the main ideas yourself, and check your thoughts against your notes. If you have difficulty

recalling or understanding something, reread the passage covering it.

Taking the Exam

When taking an objective test, first flip through the pages to see how many different types of questions are being used (True/False, multiple choice, etc.). Try to get an idea of how many there are of each so that you will be able to divide your time efficiently during the exam. If the questions are weighted, answer those carrying the most weight first.

Read all directions carefully. Make sure that you understand them. Indicate your answers EXACTLY as specified in the directions. After the instructions are clear and you have been signaled to begin the exam, proceed carefully to answer each question.

Answer the questions that are relatively “easy” for you as soon as you have read them carefully and are sure of the answer. Those that you find more “difficult” and that you are unsure of the answer should be passed over temporarily. Do not let the difficult questions delay you. Answer all of the questions that you are sure of first, so that you avoid making mistakes by having to rush through them later. Then you can apportion the time available to complete the tougher questions.

Do not be in a rush to answer a question. Read each question slowly to make sure that you know exactly what is being asked for. Read the question at least twice before you choose your answer. Remember, any final selection of an answer on the basis of more than two possible choices is most likely going to result in an incorrect answer.

Try to allocate enough time to reread the exam after you have answered all of the questions. This can help you to avoid any foolish mistakes, like marking a different answer than you intended. During the rereading, only change an answer if you have a very strong feeling that it is the correct choice.

Oral Interviews

The purpose of an oral interview is to evaluate those intangible qualities and characteristics of an individual that are essential for the position the candidate desires. Some of these qualities are attitude, dependability, initiative, integrity, leadership, maturity, loyalty, and persistence.

When preparing for oral interviews, candidates should give thought to four basic

categories, how their personal characteristics apply, and take steps to make improvements. These four categories are emotional, mental, physical, and oral.

Emotional

The most common emotional characteristic seen when interviewing is fear. This can be minimized by proper thought and effort beforehand. Fear is often brought on by feelings of inadequacy. Sufficient thought about your current position and the job to which you aspire can give you self confidence. Self confidence is the antidote for fear.

Humor is another emotional quality. Humor alleviates tension, and can help relieve apprehension before an interview. On the other hand, excessive use of humor can appear to be a lack of maturity, and so it should be used tactfully.

There are many other emotional qualities that can have a bearing on performance in an interview, so try to understand and control or express them when appropriate to the situation.

Mental

Emotional and mental factors are closely related, but in this case, mental refers to the attitude, personal experience and technical knowledge that a person has to draw upon to give concise and intelligent answers.

A positive attitude is an important factor in preparing oneself mentally for interviews. Proper study and thinking can develop this attitude. However, discretion should be used so as not to appear arrogant or cocky.

It is important to have a thorough knowledge of your job and the job to which you aspire. The ability to practically apply the knowledge that you have gained should be cultivated. If confronted with a situation that you are not familiar with, give a definite and sincere answer. Bluffing can be dangerous.

Physical

The physical aspect refers to your overall appearance and not to your physical condition. Naturally, good grooming is very important. Your clothes should be neat, clean and pressed. Dress your best, not your flashiest.

Oral

The oral quality refers to a person's oral fluency... how well and in what manner they can express themselves. It is probably the most important of the four. Three things are involved here: social ease, facial expression, and verbal expression.

Verbal expression can be improved by reading, studying grammar, and by practicing speaking before groups. Taking a course in public speaking is also a good way to improve oneself in this area.

Preparing a Resume

Why a Resume?

Preparing a resume will help you start thinking methodically about your job qualifications and opportunities. Having all of the facts about yourself at your fingertips will increase your self assurance and build your confidence. You can discuss your competencies without having to fumble for dates and significant facts. A resume tells exactly what you have to offer.

Your Asset List

The first step in composing your resume is to prepare a list of your "job assets" under these headings:

- ✪ Work History
- ✪ Education
- ✪ Personal Characteristics
- ✪ Resources

This list will become the raw material you will use to develop your basic resume, so evaluate yourself realistically now and in terms of your future aspirations.

Work History

List all of your employment history. Ask yourself the following questions about each job:

- ☞ What was my job title?
- ☞ What were the details of my job duties?
- ☞ Why was I hired for the job?
- ☞ What did I like about the job? Why?
- ☞ What did I dislike about the job? Why?
- ☞ What part of the job did I do best? Why?
- ☞ What experience did I gain that I can apply elsewhere?
- ☞ What special skills or talents did I develop?
- ☞ How long did I work there?
- ☞ Why did I leave?
- ☞ What personality factors made me successful at this job?

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Education

List the following items in the education section:

- ☞ Schools attended and dates
- ☞ Courses attended, degrees, dates
- ☞ Subjects liked least, and why
- ☞ Subjects excelled in, grades, and honors
- ☞ Extracurricular activities
- ☞ Scholarships, honors
- ☞ Special skills

Personal Characteristics

Evaluate your personal characteristics for their selling points and job significance. Be as objective as you can. Weigh both your strong points and your weak points. An honest appraisal may even help you to determine where your job interests lie! Are you adaptable, cooperative, tolerant... mannerless, aggressive, shy... or somewhere in between?

Resources

List all possible resources. These are information sources, contacts, people who can help you when you need it. Some examples are:

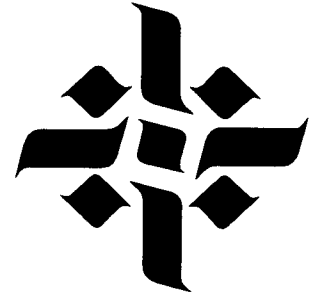
- ☞ Business associates
- ☞ Personal friends and acquaintances
- ☞ School friends and instructors
- ☞ Trade directories

Organizing Your Assets

There is no one best way to organize a resume. The best format for you is the one that highlights your talents, experience, and job capacity. Most resumes, however, are arranged in one of two ways:

- ☞ By Work Experience
- ☞ By Function or Specialization.

No matter how you arrange your resume, one important point to make is to **organize** it, keep it as brief as possible, and tell your story accurately. If possible, keep it to a single page. Always list your identifying information (name, address, phone) first.



Getting the Training You Want

If you are proactive, you don't have to wait for circumstances or other people to create perspective-expanding experiences. You can consciously create your own.

The objective of this guide is to describe the various training and educational opportunities available to Beaumont Fire/Rescue Services personnel. This section describes the types of opportunities, how to access the system, the criteria for participation, and the application and selection process.

Each member of Beaumont Fire/Rescue Services should have equal opportunity to apply for and participate in training and educational opportunities when attendance is authorized by and funded directly by the department's Training Division.

Each year, the department budgets for training resources to allow personnel to attend schools, conferences, workshops, or other organizational meetings. Attendance at these opportunities may or may not be required of specific individuals or staff. This section is limited to those opportunities that are directly sponsored by the department. In general, these opportunities are limited to those in which the department pays all of the fees, living expenses, and transportation in advance of attendance.

There are two primary reasons why individuals are sent to schools under the department's sponsorship. The first reason is to expose department members to new information, ideas, technology, and methodology. It is the intent of the department that when a person is sent to school, it will reinforce or add to the department's capabilities. The second reason is to enhance personal growth and career development for those members who are motivated to seek such opportunities.

Accessing Training Opportunities

There are basically two ways that a person can access training opportunities:

- ❶ The Assistant Chief, Deputy Chief, Chief Training Officer, other Division Heads, or Special Teams Coordinators may identify personnel who should be given specific training opportunities. These individuals may be identified as a result of job assignment or the needs of the department.
- ❷ Individual members of the department may petition to participate in training opportunities based on a desire to learn, career planning, or personal need to participate in a particular program.

Those members who would like to access specific courses of instruction should follow the following process:

- ❶ After a training opportunity has been posted, the member will complete and submit the “Request for Training Form” to the Deputy Chief.
- ❷ The Deputy Chief will review, approve or deny the training, note the reason or recommendation, and forward the form to the Chief Training Officer before the closing date.
- ❸ The Chief Training Officer will review the requests, and assign positions in the class as indicated in the training opportunity posting. Training will report back to the Deputy Chiefs regarding personnel attending approved courses on their shift.

Mandatory vs. Voluntary Training

Attendance to training opportunities may be **mandatory**, to comply with department needs, or **voluntary**, for personal growth and development.

The Training Division is responsible for the distribution of information about training opportunities. The Training Division will take the necessary steps to insure that members are informed. In addition, members are encouraged to forward to the training office any opportunities they may be aware of that have not been posted.

If a commanding officer mandates an individual to attend a course, the reasons for compulsory attendance should be directed to the individual concerned, with a copy to the Fire Chief's office. All members who are required to attend a specific course may petition for relief. In the event that a person is mandated to participate in training, a hearing will be held with the Fire Chief, Chief Training Officer, and the Officer recommending the training.

In the event mandatory attendance is required, the individual advised will be notified, in writing, of the requirement to attend. All fees associated with the prescribed training will be arranged on an individual basis.

The Assistant Chief, Deputy Chief and Chief Training Officer will review all requests for voluntary participation. Based on the needs of the department, impact on the department, and needs of the individual, candidates will be selected to attend.

Educational Reimbursement Access

To gain approval to access the educational reimbursement benefit, personnel should complete the following procedure:

- ❶ Come by the Training Division Office to complete and submit the "Pre-Enrollment Qualifying Form." If you are taking fire technology courses, you should also request a tuition exemption letter at this time.
- ❷ When the course is completed, bring in your receipts, books, and grade report that shows a grade of "C" or better for each class that you are requesting reimbursement.
- ❸ Training Division personnel will assist you in completing the "Reimbursement Approval Form." Make sure that the form is complete, signed and dated by the student.
- ❹ The Training Division is responsible for the final approval and processing of the compensations information through Headquarters.

Appendix

A. Request for Training Form

B. Pre-Enrollment Qualifying Form

C. Reimbursement Approval Form

Beaumont Fire/Rescue Services Request for Training Form

To be completed by Applicant...

Applicant Name	Date of Request
Training Requested	Dates(s) of Training
Location of Training	Dates Requesting Release from Duty
Do you meet the class prerequisites? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Dates Requesting Leave
How will you utilize this training? _____ _____ _____	<u>Leave Type Requested:</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Vacation <input type="checkbox"/> Comp Time <input type="checkbox"/> Trade

To be completed by Deputy Chief...

Is the applicant being required to take this training? <div style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</div>	Date Received from Applicant
If "Yes", who is requiring the training?	Is this training request approved? <div style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</div>
If "No", explain why? _____ _____ _____ _____	
Deputy Chief's Signature	Date forwarded to Training

To be completed by Training Division...

<u>Cost Information:</u> Registration _____ Transportation _____ Lodging _____ Per Diem _____ Other _____ Total Cost _____	Is this training request approved? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If "No", explain why? _____ _____ Chief Training Officer's Signature & Date
--	--

Beaumont Fire/Rescue Services **Educational Reimbursement Program** **Pre-Enrollment Qualifying Form**

To be completed by Applicant...

Applicant Name		Date of Request
Name of School		Date Course(s) Begin
<i>List below each course you wish to be compensated for...</i>		
Course Number	Course Title	Semester Hours
<i>Explain how each course is job related, justify why it should be considered for compensation & tell how it will help you in your present position. Add additional pages if necessary.</i>		
Applicant's Signature		Date

To be completed by Fire Chief...

- ☐ I recommend **full approval** for all of the courses listed above.
- ☐ I recommend **partial approval** for the following courses: _____
- ☐ I **deny approval** for all of the above courses.

Fire Chief's Signature	Date
------------------------	------

Forward completed form to the Training Division

Beaumont Fire/Rescue Services **Educational Reimbursement Program** **Reimbursement Approval Form**

To be completed by Employee...

Employee Name	<u>Semester Attended:</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Fall <input type="checkbox"/> Spring <input type="checkbox"/> Summer	Date Course(s) Completed:	
Name of School			
<i>List below each completed course you wish to be compensated for. Must have a "C" or better final grade.</i>			
Course Number	Course Title	Semester Hours	Final Grade

List all expenses related to the courses listed above. Each item must be accompanied by a receipt or canceled check.

\$ _____ Tuition
 \$ _____ Fees (list): _____

 \$ _____ Books (list): _____

 \$ _____ Miscellaneous _____
 \$ _____ **Total Reimbursement**

I certify that each of the above courses was not completed on City time or at City expense.

Employee's Signature

Date

I certify that each of the above courses was job related.

Fire Chief's Signature

Date

Copy of completed form should be forwarded to the Training Division.